

Milad-un-Nabi

The Celebration of the Birth of Prophet Muhammad [\[1\]](#)

by Rabia Mills

The *Hijri* date 12 *Rabi Awwal* (some say 09 Rabi Awwal) is one of twelve months in the Islamic calendar. This is the Islamic birth date of the holy Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. He was born in 570 C.E.. and since the Islamic calendar is 354 days long, the Hijri date is pushed back up to 11 days each year. Muslims celebrate this occasion by holding *Milad-un-Nabi* (translated: birth of the prophet) functions and gatherings throughout the month of Rabi Awwal.

The main thrust of these *Milad-un-Nabi* gatherings is to remember, observe, discuss and celebrate the advent of the birth and teachings of the holy Prophet Muhammad, p.b.u.h. Toronto is even home to an International Milad-un-Nabi conference which organizers have held every year for the past eight years. Speakers from all over the world have addressed large audiences here in Toronto for this conference. Various mosques and Muslim organizations will also hold their own celebrations at various times and places throughout the month. Those who cannot do it during this particular month may hold these functions during the next month or even later.

The British historian and philosopher, Thomas Carlyle, (d. 1881) in his "*Lectures on Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*," (1841) has this to say about Muhammad p.b.u.h., "The word of such a man is a voice direct from nature's own heart. Men do and must listen to that or nothing else; all else is wind in comparison . . . They called him prophet, you say? Why, he stood there face to face with them, bare, not enshrined in any mystery; visibly sewing his own cloak; cobbling his own shoes, fighting, counselling; ordering in the midst of them, they must have seen what kind of man he was. Let him be called what you like! No emperor with his dignity was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own making. During three and twenty years of tough actual trial, I find something of a veritable hero necessary for that of itself."

In the west, little is known about Prophet Muhammad's p.b.u.h. teachings by the general population. It might surprise a non-Muslim reader to learn that throughout his impressive career, every detail of his life is known. His actions and sayings, known as **Hadith** or **Traditions**, were recorded in the minutest detail.

More than fourteen hundred collections of his sayings are currently available, although the most widely used among the Sunnis are the six **Sahih** (correct, sound or authentic) collections. These collections are considered 'authentic' due to the very strict criteria used in compiling them. For instance, the narrator had to have heard the Prophet himself or herself; he or she would have to have had a good memory as well as possess good understanding and judgement; he or she would have to be an upright person known to have never told a lie, and so on. This is the first link in the chain. If the person related what they heard to another person, this would comprise a second link. Each link in the chain had the same exacting standards applied to it. If there was a break in the chain, or if the narrator had been known to have told a lie even once, or if the narrator was not considered to have been an upright person by his or her peers, then the saying would be

considered unreliable and was not included in the 'Sahih' version.

Many sayings (*Hadith*) were narrated by A'isha, one of the Prophet's wives, who was known for her good memory and upright character. It is marvellous to consider the extent of the *Hadith* literature considering that Muhammad, p.b.u.h. was unlettered. Despite the fact that he could neither read nor write, his wise words have been carefully and accurately preserved for humankind from then until now and it is hoped for generations to come.

Here is a sample of a few of the Prophet's sayings derived from the Sahih collections. This will give the reader a flavour of his wisdom. It will also show how these jewels are similar to the words of Jesus Christ and many teachings in the Bible and the Torah. Whether of a religious, non-religious or secular persuasion, it is no wonder that great people of the world have admired Muhammad as a great reformer:

The following is an excerpt from the book entitled "The Sayings of Muhammad" with a forward by Mahatma Ghandi by Allama Sir Abdullah al-Mamun al-Suhrawardi. Published by Charles Tuttle Co. Inc., Boston 1992.

The Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. said,

- He who knoweth his own self, knoweth God.
- He will not enter hell who hath faith equal to a mustard seed in his heart, and he will not enter Paradise who hath a single grain of pride, equal to a mustard seed in his heart.
- Muhammad, p.b.u.h. said: "That person will not enter Paradise who hath one atom of pride in his heart." And a man present said, "Verily, a man is fond of having good clothes and good shoes." Muhammad p.b.u.h. said, "God is Beauty and delighteth in the beautiful; but pride is holding man in contempt."
- God's kindness towards His creatures is more than that of a mother towards her babe.
- Do not say that if people do good to us, we will do good to them, and if people oppress us, we will oppress them. Instead determine that if people do good to you, you will do good to them; and if they oppress you, you will not oppress them.
- No man is a true believer unless he desireth for his brother that which he desireth for himself.
- He who believeth in one God and the Hereafter, let him speak what is good or remain silent.
- Riches are not from abundance of worldly goods, but from a contented mind.
- Whoever suppresseth his anger, when he hath in his power to show it, God will give him a great reward.
- The greatest crimes are to associate another with God, to vex your father and mother, to murder your own species, to commit suicide, and to swear a lie.
- Whoso openeth unto himself the door of begging, God will open unto him the door of poverty.
- A man asked, "Are there rewards for our doing good to animals and giving them water to drink?" Muhammad, p.b.u.h. said, "Verily there are heavenly rewards for any act of kindness to a live animal."
- The best of alms is that which the right hand giveth and the left hand knoweth not of.
- There are seven people whom God will draw under His own shadow, on the day when there will be no shadow; one of them will be a man who hath given alms and concealed it,

so that his left hand knew not what his right hand did.

- The best of almsgiving is that which springeth from the heart, and is uttered by the lips to soften the wounds of the injured.
- All actions are judged by the motives prompting them.
- The most excellent *Jihad* [trans.:striving] is that for the conquest of the self. [i.e., the carnal self or ego]
- The exercise of religious duties will not atone for the fault of an abusive tongue.
- Keep yourselves far from envy because it eateth up and taketh away good actions, like a fire eateth up and burneth wood.
- God is gentle and loveth gentleness.
- What is Paradise? Muhammad p.b.u.h. replied "It is what the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor ever occurred to the mind of man."
- He is not a perfect man of fortitude who hath not fallen into misfortunes; and there is no physician but the experienced.
- Every good act is charity; and verily it is a good act to meet your brother with an open countenance, and to pour water from your own water bag into his vessel.
- Guard yourselves from six things, and I am your security for Paradise. When you speak, speak the truth; perform when you promise; discharge your trust; be chaste in thought and action; and withhold your hand from striking, from taking that which is unlawful, and bad.
- Feed the hungry and visit the sick, and free the captive, if he be unjustly confined. Assist any person oppressed, whether Muslim or non-Muslim.
- Speak to men according to their mental capacities, for if you speak all things to all men, some cannot understand you, and so fall into errors. Abuse no-one, and if a man abuse thee, and lay open a vice which he knoweth in thee, then do not disclose one which thou knowest in him.
- Meekness and modesty are two branches of *Iman* [Faith]; and vain talking and embellishing are two branches of hypocrisy.
- The world and all things in it are valuable; but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman.
- Whoever doeth good to girls, it will be a curtain to him from hell-fire.
- Whoever befriendeth three daughters, or three sisters, and teacheth them manners, and is affectionate to them, till they come of age, may God apportion Paradise for him.
- Whoever hath a daughter, and doth not bury her alive, or scold her, or prefer his male children to her, may God bring him into Paradise. [Note: this refers to the practice of female infanticide which was common in those days. The Prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h. abolished this practice]
- God enjoins you to treat women well, for they are your mothers, daughters and aunts.
- Do not prevent women from coming to the mosque.

[1] p.b.u.h. is short for "peace be upon him" which is an expression used by Muslims to indicate reverence towards the holy Prophet Muhammad.